



MEMORANDUM

NOTE DE SERVICE

TO
A

Debra Young
Director
Research and Policy Branch

FROM
DE

Cathie Ventura
Policy Analyst
Research and Policy Branch

SUBJECT
OBJET

The Chris Brown Hypersensitivity matter

SECURITY - CLASSIFICATION - DE SÉCURITÉ
OUR FILE/NOTRE RÉFÉRENCE INTERNAL
YOUR FILE/VOTRE RÉFÉRENCE
DATE July 18, 1988

I was contacted by Mark Richardson on July 15, 1988. Mr. Richardson is a science advisor with the Environmental Protection Department at Health and Welfare Canada. He advised that in the document which Chris Brown submitted when he made his appearance before the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, there was attached a bibliography of all correspondence. Upon reviewing the bibliography of correspondence, Mr. Richardson found, under item 31, a letter to which he believes Mr. Brown refers to as Health and Welfare's view of the illness. The 1986 letter is from the Minister, Jake Epp, to Mr. Brown. It was in response to a letter from Mr. Brown dated April 15, 1986. It was received by the Environmental Health Directorate April 25, 1986 for reply. Mr. Richardson did not feel he was in a position to provide us with a copy of the letter, however, he read the paragraph which was the most relevant to this matter. It reads as follows:

"There has been much controversy in medical circles over the existence, as well as the diagnosis and treatment of what has been called "total allergy syndrome" or "environmental hypersensitivity". It may be of interest to you that the Ontario Ministry of Health commissioned a committee, the Thompson committee, to investigate environmental hyper-sensitivity. A major finding of the commission was that this syndrome was, in some cases, a true medical problem, in addition to any psychological problems which some patients might have."

The letter went on to say that the Canadian Medical Association still was sceptical despite the recommendations in the Thompson report, yet Health and Welfare is concerned about Mr. Brown's illness. Mr. Richardson advised that Mr. Brown has had much contact with Health and Welfare and they have various documents from him. Mr. Richardson emphasized it is not for Health and Welfare to determine what is a disease. In the Environmental Protection Department, chemicals individuals are exposed to are studied. Hyper-environmental sensitivity is directly being dealt with through programs dealing with chemicals that people are exposed to. Mr. Richardson was wondering how this matter would be proceeding, and would like to be advised

Mr. Brown also has suggested to me that the Commission's letter misrepresents his concern which is that the Government must mitigate damages not merely publicly recognize the disease's existence. He also requested a new letter be sent to the Hon. Lucien Bouchard, Minister responsible for the Status of the Disabled, pointing out the government's obligation in this area.

I called Mr. Brown and left the message (he was not in) that we would not write Mr. Bouchard at this time but would wait to see what Mr. Epp's response will be.

I talked to Ms. Lipozenko to explain that the purpose of the Commission's letter to Mr. Epp was to point out that we felt it reasonable to correct the public record now that medical evidence supports the physical nature of the disease. I also pointed out that it is not our business to question the legitimacy of a medical condition. This was borne out by the fact that we accepted and investigated Mr. Brown's complaint.

I repeated this to Mr. Schachter.



The Canadian Medical Association

L'Association médicale canadienne

July 28, 1986

Mr. Chris Brown
1102 - 258 Lisgar Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0C9

Dear Chris:

We have reviewed all relative files and can find no documentation of the Association ever stating that "the CMA continues to be skeptical about the causes of environmental hypersensitivity".

We plan to take this matter up with the office of the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Yours sincerely,

D. A. Geekie, Director
Department of Communications
and Government Relations